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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: KING'S PRIVATE SECRETARY DISMISSES THAKSIN CLAIMS

REF: A. BANGKOK 3916 (WHAT'S THAKSIN UP TO?)

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 3349 (NOODLES WITH THAKSIN)

[1](#)C. BANGKOK 2990 (THAKSIN SEES SELF AS THAILAND'S
ASSK)

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce, reason 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (C) The Ambassador met July 7 with the King's Principal Private Secretary, Asa Sarasin, to discuss the political situation. Asa confirmed several of our assumptions. First, he admitted that the government's proposed election decree was on hold in the Palace. They wanted more clarity on certain issues, especially the status of the Election Commission, before the King would sign the decree, Asa said. He expected the embattled election commissioners to step down soon, and this would necessitate some delay in holding the elections. (Comment: many Thaksin opponents have forecast that the King would not sign the decree until the controversial election commissioners were replaced. Asa stopped short of saying this, but did indicate that the Palace is not ready to go along with the current election plans. End comment.) Asa complained that the main opposition Democrat Party was hopeless; Thaksin was keeping it on the defensive with a series of lawsuits. Asa joined most commentators here in presuming that neither major party would, in the end, be dissolved by the Constitutional Court. Asa expected Thai Rak Thai to win the majority of seats in the next parliament. (Note: Democrat Party leader Abhisit also admitted to the Ambassador last week that the party was not able to reach out as effectively to the voters and formulate a winning platform because it was so busy defending itself from Thaksin's attacks. End Note.)

[1](#)2. (C) Asa also dismissed Thaksin's "revised history" of his audiences with the King. (Asa is one of the few people present when the King has an audience.) Thaksin has recently taken to claiming that the King had ordered him to leave office during his April 4 audience. Thaksin also says that the King told him on May 19 that Thaksin could never return as PM (reftel B,C). Asa's account parallels the original story we had from Thaksin: the PM told the King right after the election that he would step down, and the King just nodded in response. Asa said that, during the May audience, Thaksin told the King that he would return to a more active role as caretaker, and the King approved. They then discussed practical issues about the replacement for the two vacant seats on the Election Commission.

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador and Asa discussed the motivation for Thaksin's lightly-veiled attack on the highly respected Privy Council President Prem. Asa was quite upset by Thaksin's comments, and joined in wondering what Thaksin could be thinking (ref A). Asa suggested that it might be a misguided attempt at gaining public sympathy, to keep his options open

for a potential return as PM some day.

¶4. (C) Comment: Asa does not always level with us, but we are inclined to buy his version of the meetings between the King and Thaksin, especially since Thaksin's story is constantly changing.

BOYCE